

DATE: July 31, 2000

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Stephen M. Jones, Deputy Chief of Forestry Assistance
California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection

SUBJECT: **Invitation to comment** on a draft Amendment to the California Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need.
The draft Amendment is **enclosed**.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is seeking public comment on a proposal to significantly expand the scope of the state's Forest Legacy Program. The proposal is in the form of an Amendment to the Assessment of Need (AON) that established the Program in 1995. This Amendment would allow landowners in an additional 28 California counties to take advantage of the Program. A copy of the proposed Amendment is enclosed for your review and comment.

The Program

Forest Legacy is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to encourage the conservation of privately-owned forest resources in the State. It is a cooperative effort among private, State, Federal and local partners, in which Federal and State matching funds are used to acquire conservation easements from willing owners of forestlands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses, such as development. Forest Legacy seeks to ensure that forests and key forest resources can remain intact for future generations of Californians.

In 1995 the CDFFP completed its AON that established the California Forest Legacy Program. At that time six counties or portions of counties were designated as Forest Legacy Areas (FLAs): Mendocino, Sonoma, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Riverside and San Diego.

The Amendment

This Amendment to the 1995 AON leaves unchanged most of the AON's original language. The Program's conservation goals and objectives would not change, nor would the land parcel eligibility criteria. The Amendment would designate Forest Legacy Areas in an additional 28 California counties:

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Amador | Madera | Santa Barbara |
| Butte | Mariposa | Shasta |
| Calaveras | Monterey | Sierra |
| El Dorado | Napa | Siskiyou |
| Fresno | Nevada | Tehama |
| Humboldt | Placer | Trinity |
| Lake | Plumas | Tulare |
| Lassen | Sacramento | Tuolumne |
| Los Angeles | San Bernadino | Yuba |
| | San Luis Obispo | |

In the Amendment each new FLA has a section that defines the boundaries of the FLA; summarizes the FLA's key forest and forest habitat types; describes the threats to forest resources; establishes FLA-specific conservation goals and objectives; and describes how the Program would help private forestland owners voluntarily conserve their land.

In addition, some changes are proposed for the section of the AON titled "Operation of the State Program," and pertain to the structure of the Program, the application and selection process for forest parcels, monitoring of conservation easements, and Program management and funding.

Additions also have been made to the section titled "Selection Process for Forest Legacy Areas" that list which new FLAs are being included and why, and describe how the amendment process is being conducted.

Comment Process

We need your comments! Please review the enclosed document and send your comments to us. Please share the document with other interested parties.

Send your written comments to Stephen M. Jones, Deputy Chief of Forestry Assistance, California Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection, P.O. Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460. Or you may fax your comments to the same office at (916) 653-8957. **Comments must be received by 3:00 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 24, in order to be considered during revision of the proposed AON amendment.**

For further information about the California Forest Legacy Program, please contact Mr. Jones at 916-653-9450.